

America's Army

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AMERICA'S ARMY" was an expression the Department of the Army (DA) used during the 1990s to describe the U.S. Army to the general population. The expression is even more important now as the nation assesses the need to substantially transform the military and as the Army addresses internal change in response to new post-cold war requirements such as fighting international terrorism.

Although man is often at sea and in the air, he is essentially a land being. Responsibility for providing the military force required to influence man's actions on land in accordance with U.S. military policy rests, therefore, exclusively with landpower—the U.S. Army. Airpower and seapower are absolutely vital to national defense, but they come and go; their presence is transitory.¹ Landpower ensures an enduring presence that is prepared to enforce the national will across vast continental landmasses. Landpower remains, when all other incentives fail, the bayonet at the throat that mandates human performance consistent with U.S. national objectives. A broadly understood conceptualization of the nature and purposes of America's Army, shared across both federal and state executive, legislative, and judicial authorities—

- Establishes a theoretical framework that shapes general policy and program imperatives. This framework can be the lodestone for both external direction and internal correction.
- Reviews the military landpower component's roots and its adaptation to new requirements while laying a framework for assessing the merits of policy and program changes.
- Establishes a milieu within which nondisruptive change can prosper. Depending on environmental realities, change either can be accelerated or diminished through orders to Army commanders, resulting in purposeful action.

The U.S. Army is unique as a military service in

this country as well as being unique in relation to all other nations' contemporary armies. Thus, the Army shares fully no responsibilities or requirements with other military forces, foreign or domestic. This uniqueness must be reinforced during the

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transformation process. A broader understanding of the nature of America's Army will minimize frequent policy errors of aggregation such as mandating dysfunctional uniformity within the Department of Defense (DOD) or with the military forces of other nations. The U.S. Army is neither better nor worse than the other U.S. armed services, but it is substantially different and may require unique policies and programs.

Strengths of America's Army

Landpower—the U.S. Army—must reflect the unique characteristics of the United States of America as a democracy, as a nation, as a federal republic, as a state, and as a continent. These characteristics are the practical sources of the nature and capabilities of America's Army, literally a citizen's army. Singly, and in combination, these characteristics interact to mold a unique landpower force. Because of its fundamental importance, each

strength must be considered in detail, both how it influences the Army's nature and how it frames its responses to current and future challenges.

Democracy. Landpower exists with the consent of the governed. The institution reflects the will of the people. The Army provides a particular public

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service—providing a citizen's army governed entirely by civilian institutions. The Army's fundamental purpose is to fight and win our nation's wars with unlimited liability of those in service to state. Service to nation, including death, sets the military aside as a profession and in the nature of its service to the people it serves. It is the custodian of the nation's youth as it prepares them to go in harm's way. Officers, sergeants, and soldiers are equally at risk in attaining U.S. military objectives; all ranks serve in harm's way.

The Army must be wholly sensitive to generational change and the need for public esteem if it is to attract quality volunteers in an open, competitive market. Seeking "a few good" potential soldiers is not a viable alternative. An individual's culture—the individual striving to excel as a member of a disciplined team performing under great stress—prevails. "Be All You Can Be" and "An Army of One" must be more than recruiting ploys. They are fundamental expressions of the desire to excel in a meritocracy that are characteristic of soldiers at all grades today and are a vital expectation of America's youth. Be All You Can Be emphasizes the importance of a competent, confident individual; "Proud to be an American," by his or her disciplined competence, becoming a role model for others. Individual soldiers are an important deployable strategic resource, as has been demonstrated in the Partnership for Peace Program. Soldiers serve and excel, however, as members of cohesive teams—the individual soldier "of one" in a team accomplishes the task or mission to standard, not letting his or her

team members down. Individuals join; teams fight and win. The Army comprises teams of winners—an all-American team!

The Army is expected to support—to confirm the merit of, if not to lead—national social programs within the framework of national landpower military readiness requirements. After what many thought was a slow start, the Army has become a national leader in developing soldiers regardless of race, ethnic origin, religion, or (unless proscribed by law) gender. It and the other armed services lead in assimilating diverse nationalities into the national melting pot. As a citizen's army, America's Army can be no less than the national model for executing important national social programs as well as a model for supporting domestic defense. It sets the standard.

The Army must be an apolitical institution led by politically sensitive leaders prepared to express the requirements of the profession while remaining attentive to local concerns. It must be proactively open to media at all echelons to better inform the citizenry.

Nation. Landpower reflects shared basic values that are born in national diversity. Competence-basing—rewarding competent performance—is practiced across boundaries of race, ethnic origin, gender, and religion. Landpower must represent the national population at all grades. The United States' various national and ethnic elements as "a nation of nations" are absolutely represented in the Army. Leaders should be developed from all backgrounds and regions in representative proportions.

Landpower presence commits the nation more than that of any other military service because the Army is directly associated with people in its political milieu. Once committed, these popular associations across economic and social strata, both within the United States and in the region of commitment, are not easily withdrawn.

State. The power of the state confers legitimate use of landpower, seapower, and airpower to win conflicts. The citizenry expects highly credible, disciplined basic mission proficiency to fight and win as the national civil leadership expects across a broad spectrum of potential conflict.

New threats mandate new capabilities: military, political, economic, and social expertise. Terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) are new "old" threats. Homeland defense becomes an important landpower responsibility, not greatly different from the Army's practice during westward expansion in the 1800s. An abiding responsibility of

Active and Reserve component soldiers at Fort Polk, Louisiana, clamp down transom beams on a 100-foot Bailey bridge during the trainup for the 49th Armored Division's deployment to Bosnia.

SFC Brenda Benner



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America's Army is to look forward, to anticipate new threats, and to be ready when called upon. This responsibility has been reaffirmed since the aftermath of terrorism in New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. The possibility of rapidly emerging, unpredictable threats mandates that the Army sustain its mobilization capability to win against any combination of potential landpower threats while providing necessary support to U.S. seapower and airpower.

Federal republic. The checks and balances of the Constitution—executive, legislative, and judicial—are reflected beneficially in reinforcing military jurisdictions: federal versus state, national versus regional, and individual versus unit as represented in Active and Reserve forces.

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links could be emerging national political leaders from among citizen-soldiers such as Desert Storm veterans. Some characteristics of each landpower component follow:

- Active Army: federal and national—individuals and units charged to sustain immediate readiness across the range of landpower capability.
- Army National Guard (ARNG): state and regional units—the governors' militia armies that stay prepared to respond to state emergencies and home defense, mobilize to support Active forces, and generate local political understanding and support for America's Army.
- U.S. Army Reserve (USAR): federal and regional individuals and units. USAR Individual Mobilization Augmentees are the source of superbly qualified individuals drawn from a national sample. The USAR creates units composed of personnel across metropolises such as the Chicago, New York City, and national capitol region multistate metropolitan areas. The ARNG is limited to separate state jurisdictions.

The strength of the U.S. Army is in the aggregate capabilities of the entire force—AC and RC—

reflecting individuals and units in nationally and regionally composed organizations at national and state government levels, all reinforced by DA and state civilians. Each component's strengths must be

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drawn upon fully to reinforce strengths and minimize weaknesses such as citizen-soldiers' lack of time or the active Army's shortage of focused, highly technical, civilian-related expertise.

Appreciating the unique and truly American institutions—the ARNG and USAR—is important in understanding the power of America's Army. Each component is different, but transcendentally, all three unite in a common bond—the Army's men and women who selflessly serve their nation. The United States must preserve and nurture the enduring willingness of Americans to serve in uniform. It must not simply cast aside the federal-state, national-regional, individual-unit strengths of any of the three components to resolve some transitory contemporary budget or homeland defense challenge. Rather, the interlocking, carefully balanced capabilities of all three should be reinforced at times of national trial.

If the U.S. Army did not already have all three components, it would have to create them because they represent the diversity of governance that is the United States. Their inherent competition for resources is healthy. Moreover, the lowest common denominator of best landpower practice for the future is not necessarily the Active unit, justifiably dominant as the model for landpower during the cold war. New threats, including defeating international terrorism, cyberwarfare, and WMD, mandate that each component provide capabilities that magnify unique strengths. The whole of the landpower capability is much greater than the sum of its individual component parts.

Continent. The essential global capability and perspective now present within the Army derived,

in great measure, from the intensity of commitment overseas during the 1990s. Leaders at all grades possess an extraordinary range of individual service experience. The Army must be prepared for both inter- and intracontinental force projections under all circumstances of distance, terrain, climate, and population.

Implications

As a unique institution, America's Army provides the United States with abiding strengths and vulnerabilities rarely shared with either of the other services or armies of other nations.

The necessary. The necessary need continuing support—

- Diverse America's Army—quality, nationally representative (race, gender, and ethnicity) youth volunteers—will produce thousands of individual soldier role models who support individual and unit excellence to standard while serving under great stress. That diversity of highly capable individuals from all components who manifest the vision of America ensures international landpower preeminence.

- AC-generated landpower, Title 10, U.S. Code, capabilities for AC and RC forces as well as for other services.² Complementary products are required to respond to diverse requirements.

- National support of qualitative personnel and equipment requirements for ready landpower and mobilization forces. Adjust and expand, if appropriate, ARNG and USAR regional or local capabilities that are essential to effective homeland defense and to support overseas campaigns.

- Supporting national social and economic expectations of our nation's youth but not to the detriment of basic warfighting capabilities as determined by national political leaders. Examples include unlimited liability requiring separate but comparable military due process appropriate to preserving good order and discipline, and support for clearly beneficial national projects. Improving a soldier's education and training to produce a more competent soldier, then a more productive civilian, must be a major Army program.

- Preparing joint and combined leaders and team members is vital to landpower capabilities. Every soldier becomes a leader as his or her responsibility to perform complex tasks to standard migrates to lower echelons, but all perform, both vertically and horizontally, as team members. Increasingly, these teams are joint, multinational, and both civilian and military. The preparation focus should



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be on creating and sustaining proficient teams at all echelons.

The dysfunctional. The dysfunctional need correcting if America's Army is to continue to prevail in its service to the nation.

- Continuing the grinding intensity of commitment despite "resource anemia." "Consuming the seed corn" as the Army reconfigures impairs necessary introspection and could limit innovation. Because of the universality of task, condition, and standard, no Army has ever known in such detail what is required to be excellent and what is actually occurring. A mismatch between the rhetoric of excellence and the reality of average corrodes the creative energies that are essential in transformation. There will never be a timeout. Should the Army's drawdown continue or the current resource anemia that compromises the integrity of excellence to standard continue, the impact will become more apparent as the sinews of a professional force erode. An increased focus on national defense stimulated by counterterrorism operations should generate support

to better match resources with commitments. If not, many of the best will leave as their talents are drawn to other important national purposes.

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- Constabulary orientation as force-generation capability. Diverse global challenges ensure the preservation of a credible constabulary capability. The Army's fundamental ethos is winning in close combat and enduring under great stress—as at

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the heavy fighting during the initial stages and the deterrence-to-victory cycle. America's Army is not postmodern.³

- AC and RC competition leading to a reduction in the relative importance of any of the three components. Using competition to improve the performance of the larger Army team is healthy; using competition to improve at cost to another component is dysfunctional. A shared commitment during the 1990s has developed exceptional RC expertise. The unique national capabilities of the citizen-soldier, full-time soldier, and full-time civilian team must be exploited, particularly as homeland security is addressed post-11 September 2001.

- Leading-edge change in national social change is deemed inimical to the good order and discipline professional military leaders require to fight and win. The unique professional requirements of unlimited liability in service to nation mandate an essentially conservative—progressive, not reactionary—response to social change.

- Common personnel policies with other services

unless clearly appropriate to landpower warfighting readiness requirements. Uniform military policies should be the exception, not the rule. Sergeants lead and fight in landpower; this is not the case in other services. There is exceptional task migration down echelon occurring in close combat forces such as Land Warrior and Joint Special Operations Command Delta Force operatives. Similarly, personnel policies need not be common across components, given the ARNG's diverse state responsibilities and highly specialized USAR units. Why should there be common retirement ages, promotion incentives, or service benefits?

- Comparing U.S. Army policies and programs with other nations' armies. Because of U.S. landpower's unique characteristics, there is no lowest common denominator comparison between U.S. forces and any other nation's forces. Other than the shared unlimited liability of service to state, other national landpower forces cannot be compared to U.S. forces. Many are appropriately postmodern. Perhaps this is because the U.S. Army performs to a higher standard; certainly it is because America's Army is the product of unique formational circumstances in our democracy, nation, federal republic, state, and continent.

The U.S. Army is a great Army that has become even better in recent years because of the extraordinary quality and diversity of its volunteers. It is developing highly competent leaders using independently assessed performance to standard at all grades, from private to corps commander, with national civilian leaders' encouragement. America's Army is a unique organization. As national leaders move toward essential post-cold war transformation and respond to homeland security requirements, uniqueness should be used to advantage, not suppressed for short-term financial or bureaucratic reasons. **MR**

NOTES

1. This is not to denigrate in any way the important contributions of airpower and seapower. Operations in Afghanistan fully demonstrate their abiding importance.

2. Title 10, U.S. Code, *Armed Forces*, establishes Department of the Army's responsibilities to access, train, and equip Army units to support regional joint forces commanders in chief requirements.

3. Charles Moskos, John Allen Williams, and David R. Segal, eds., *The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces After the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2. "Five major organizational changes characterize the postmodern military: the increasing interpenetrability of civilian and military spheres, both structurally and culturally; the diminution of differences within the armed ser-

vices based on branch of service, rank, and combat versus support roles; a change in the military's purpose from fighting wars to missions that traditionally would not be considered military; that military forces are used more in international missions authorized, or at least legitimated, by entities beyond the nation state; and internationalizing military forces. Here, we have in mind the emergence of the Eurocorps, and multinational and binational divisions in NATO countries." For a more compelling discussion of the groundsprings of America's Army today, see Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence* (New York: Knopf, 2001). He describes the Hamiltonian, Wilsonian, Jeffersonian, and Jacksonian schools of U.S. foreign policy.

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